

Habitat Ljubljana, 3-8 of June 2019

(i) AN INVITATION

On 3-8 of June 2019, a HABITAT will take place at the Old Electric Power Plant ("Stara Elektrarna" or **SMEEL** for short), on Slomškova st. 18, **Ljubljana**). A Habitat is a joint, a common working space, which we create by working and observing others at work.

With this, you are invited to apply and see, if there are still free places left!

The basic ideas of Habitat are:

- to co-create, by working, a working space such as it is needed in that moment
- to observe others at work
- to accept, that we are observed by others

Habitat is **free** – it's not to be paid for, no-one is paid for organizing or managing it, and you are not paid to do it. The budget of Ljubljana Habitat = 0.

For each Habitat there will be a **limited number of guests from abroad** accepted. Each guest will be offered to sleep at **SMEEL**, for free (it's just a wooden floor; bring anything you need for sleeping). The spaces are limited in order **not to over-saturate** the space and to keep the option of the **local artists** coming-in to work on a daily basis.

The most basic practical information:

- Habitat will take place 3- 8 of June in [Old Electric Power Plant Ljubljana \(SMEEL\)](#), on Slomškova 18, in the center of the city. We have the place for 6 complete days and nights. One suggestion is, that there is an open, shared working space till 17h. The evening and nights are open for suggestions.
- **all participants** that wish to take part in Habitat at any point of the week **will meet on the 1st day, Monday, June 3rd at 15h, inside SMEEL. This goes especially for the people sleeping at SMEEL.**
- **The Habitat officially ends at 18h on Saturday, the 8th of June. After the end of Habitat**, the latest departure time from SMEEL for foreign guests is Sunday, June 9th at 9 am.

For those interested, there's **more information below**. The practical info is at the very bottom.

The way to apply is described at the bottom of this document, in the "What to do if I want to take part" section.

A good day to all, and see you!

(ii) the **SECOND TEXT**

And so: On **3-8 of June a HABITAT will take place at the Old Electric Power Plant** (Stara Elektrarna or **SMEEL** for short, address: Slomškova 18, **Ljubljana**). **HABITAT is** a joint, a common working space, which we create by working and observing others at work.

Our work will be to continue developing our own artistic practices. Or to say it differently – our work will be to follow our interest. You are all invited to join.

Have you ever shared a studio or a working space with someone else? If you did, that already contained the essence of what is suggested here. It doesn't have to be much more than that. A space for work, intended for deepening one's personal research or an artistic practice. Where **practice** is that what interests me, what I do every day, what feeds me and what I feed in return, in order to keep my interest in it. By default, it changes as I myself change and as life changes. It's part of my identity.

A practice can revolve around or contain elements of somatic practices, various types of body work, breathing or movement exercises, the development of one's methodology of teaching or learning, research of movement, instant composition, vocal work, listening, working on technique... to name but a few.

We all have such "practices". Sometimes they are just covered with other "junk": with all the practical, the social, intentional, produced, obligatory. That week in June I can offer myself some time, during which I can remove all that "other".

The basic ideas of Habitat are:

- co-creating such a working space as we need in that moment, with dedicated work and with consideration for ourselves and others. This working space will then be our natural Habitat.
- watching others at working a constructive, benevolent way, while creating our own opinion about what they are doing, in this way enriching our own work
- learning to guide our own working process in a concentrated and genuine way, while accepting being watched by others.
- The emphasis of Habitat is on a practical / experiential part of the working process.

Habitat is free – it's not to be paid for, and you are not paid for doing it. No one guides it, no one "teaches" it. You simply **come** to the space and **begin working**, each on one's own. Next to others, doing the same as you. You can stay for as long as you like, you can

come and go several times a day, you can come only every 2nd day. No one, except your own sensitivity, will tell you what you can do, or what you mustn't do. Habitat is an offering of time, space and the support of a focused environment for your work on what interests you. What that *is* will become clear as you look back on the week, after the Habitat is over.

I send out this first invitation, and then... whatever will be, will be. But I'll be extremely happy, if you took this event for your own. Perhaps the combination of a beautiful working space, Ljubljana in June, the open air concerts, the cherries which are in season, the proximity of the river, the wonderful and spacious working space we have, the possibility of sleeping in the working space at SMEEL + the possibility of meeting with the regional community, the sharing of artistic practices...perhaps all these will be enough to lure you here and invite you to work alongside others. If you haven't been yet – it's a good time to come over.

The budget for Habitat = 0, both for organization as for the execution of it. The contribution of Bunker, who generously host us at SMEEL, is in the space they offer us.

(iii) Attachment 1: Habitat

This will be the fifth edition of Habitat. The first took place in 2014 in Barcelona, the second in 2016 in Athens, the third in June 2018 in Ljubljana, fourth in Napoli in 2019. In each of them we've learnt something.

Habitat comes out of years of living and working on the road, self-learning, the daily work of a dancer, often without regular working conditions. From not wanting to network systematically for the sake of it, but being very much interested in what others do, who think/live along similar lines.

It also comes out of meeting, and sometimes failing to meet, those challenges that come with continuously working on the road. Working alone. The realities of a self-employed artist's life. Out of noticing structures and situations that support one's working process and can perhaps also serve to support mine. There's also that instructive and repeatedly interesting question: "What now, where do I continue, how to keep this going?"

Habitat is a suggestion of a minimal structure for a group of individuals to create a shared working environment, one moment at a time, by working. It's a way for them to tune to a shared frequency, by being sensitive to their own needs and the needs of others they cohabitate with. At the end of the working period, what was created through this sensitivity is therefore the working conditions *then* required for *that* group of people.

A home to practices

Habitat is also about giving a home, even a transitory one, to personal artistic practices in performing arts. These practices can very generally also be called *improvisational*, or *process oriented work* – where the focus of the work is the process itself. A performance

or a public presentation of this work is to expose the process; as oppose to presenting the results, separated from the process itself.

Practices have been “happening” for a while and process oriented performance work has been taking off again lately. But they don’t yet have their own home, nor their own public within the institution of performing art.

It can be said, that the practice of improvisation is about seeing what *already is*, and how to make the most of it in order to survive the situation. Which is also the spirit of this time –isn’t that what the refugees are doing? And isn’t that also what (on a different scale) many artists, that don’t work in the subsidized machinery of art production, are forced into?

The idea of Habitat is, that the existing structures, organizations, educational institutions with their own spaces and infrastructure, would for a period of 5-7 days a year offer their space for a Habitat to take place. This way anybody, who keeps their own practice going and whose work is focused on the process itself, could through the internet check for any particular week of the year, where in Europe there is a space where they can *do their work* undisturbed. They’d sign up for it and on arrival meet others there, who work in a similar way. A working space would always be available somewhere. In theory, one could continuously work all year round, by following the temporary homes of Habitat, from one community to another.

In Habitat, each participant follows their own interest while observing others do the same. For to keep going in the long run, it’s *essential* to stay interested in what one is doing. Following one’s interest as it changes can be challenging. It requires courage, motivation, the ability to reinvent. What interests us *does* change, or else it’s *us* that change through learning and unlearning, or both. At some point we get to the end of what we know, walking into the unknown, passing through boredom, lostness, repetition, to a renewed interest. In a shared working process, individual concentrations add up. As do the disturbances - the different phases of individual development cycles are sure to overlap.

It’s as important to clearly state what is NOT possible in the scheme of Habitat.

It’s not possible for someone to begin organizing additional group structures within Habitat, propose workshops, or propose to guide a Habitat from any one artistic or aesthetic viewpoint. It’s not possible to *fill-in* that space, which is available for anyone to work on *their* interest and *their* practice. Habitat is not a place to develop stage-work, or do joint work whose focus will exclude you from the environment. If the nature of a personal practice asks for a duet, trio or a group within Habitat, I (we) practice with a sensibility to the space and the others in it. It’s not a shared studio, where several “projects” happen side by side. It’s not even a place to learn from others by being led/taught, by following labs.

Habitat is not necessarily a group thing, though it can be that, too. It can even be some of the above, as long as what is done is done with continuous responsiveness and sensitivity to the environment.

Habitat is a place where communication and negotiation happens first and foremost without words; and our actions should be such that we can “hear” that. Meeting others socially is of course possible, but is not necessary and might not happen at all, as some

people might prefer it that way, for them.

Habitat proposes, that through listening and working, structures happen and also dissolve spontaneously, continuously. This valuable emptiness is there for a reason, nothing else should aim to take its place. In the same way, no one should *determine* the way the space should be organized, since it is essentially self-organized, through the listening of myself and others.

Not-knowing and being-attentive-to-what-is-there are two essential parts of learning through experience. Without them, Habitat might become just one of the already existing artistic or pedagogic structures. If due to circumstances it happens to change its basic identity, it should also be given another name.

As written above, a Habitat is always free- it's not to be paid for, and you are not paid for doing it. Ideally, what should be sponsored by the host are the actual needs: food (but not per-diems) could be offered, the travel could be refunded, technical support could be given, accommodation could be offered (hopefully at the working space or else with the local community).

learning by observing others; supporting the work of others by watching them, giving them an opportunity to practice attention while they are being observed; recognizing/generating ideas about what we see

The idea of Habitat also supposes, that it's interesting to observe somebody following their interest *while* they are conscious of being looked at. At that particular moment the observed simultaneously *see* themselves from the outside (with the eyes of the observer), and *feel* themselves from the inside. This skill is very useful for on-stage performance (whatever the "stage" happens to be). Habitat offers a situation for practicing *performing*.

An observer creates credibility for the doer, which in turn gives importance to the observer. An observer needs to make up *their own* mind about *what* it is they are observing. In this way, a space and an importance is given to what *isn't* known to the observer. In a sensitive space, all influence all. Those present keep shifting through the roles of doer and observer. As a Habitat participant, I shouldn't aspire to "give something to the space", to "do something for others", in order for us to "become a group". We *are* a group already, supporting each other *by* working together, side by side, in an attentive way. The above also goes for sound/voice/music, *if* created as an attempt for a common denominator, as an accompaniment, or as a tool for "adding energy" to the space. The music, as any outside instruction or noise, covers so much of what already *is*, in/around us.

offering an audience a chance to learn to watch this kind of work

On one of the working days (in Ljubljana Habitat it'll be on a Friday) the doors are announced as "open" and the "outside" visitors are invited to come watch us work. (note: the doors are actually open to observers at any time during Habitat; but only for a few hours during the event is this publicly announced.) To a newcomer (self-perceived either as an observer or as an auditor), Habitat offers the possibility of learning about watching. During the week, a viewer can make the passage: from the possibility and an educated

wish of observing what *has been* “made”, or what they *should* be seeing; towards observing the process of becoming in its multi-layered-ness, the process of searching, the practice of continuous attention while being observed. It’s the opposite of voyeurism, since the object of observation agrees to being watched, because being watched a part of their score. *If* this relation of the two already *is* a performance, it’s one where the doer works to stay true to their momentary process and does not give in to (works with) the tendency for its representation. The wider reaching utopian vision of Habitat is to seduce and bring the wider public to a place, where they would seek to watch process-focused artistic work. Where they would know how to recognize the finesse in it and would have the patience to witness something in-becoming.

So what to do, if I want to take part:

Only for guests from abroad (local artists and practitioners, read further below):

Send your wish via email, to email@jurijkonjar.com. Please only send if you really intend on coming. With this you also agree, that **if you are invited to come**, you’ll **be there on the 1st day, June 3rd, at least by 14h.**

If there still is a place for you, then I’ll reply to you soon, but **latest within 10 days from when you sent the email**. If you are accepted please **do come** - check for travel tickets and look into your busy agenda **BEFORE you apply!**

If you don’t hear from me within 10 days, then **you know the places have been filled** and you are not able to join us, this time.

To include in your email:

- **Lunch** at 12:45 sharp, €3,56 per meal. – **yes or no**, which days. Different to what I thought and said previously, only omnivore lunches are available - NOT vegetarian OR vegan!

All lunches are paid at once, the 1st day at 15h. **The deadline for ordering lunches is 25.5.2018, to my email address.** The lunches will be had at a kindergarten, 5 min walk away from the venue.

For the Local artists and practitioners:

The above info on how to apply does not refer to you if you are a local artist - meaning, if you **don’t sleep at the venue** but come to work and then leave, every day, or several times a day.

“**Local**” in the above context means working and living in the Slovenian community.

Even if you *are* a local artist please still **read the Habitat description** on the above link, and then meet us at the first meeting (as stated in the text above). If you’re a **local artist**, **no need for you to apply** - just come.

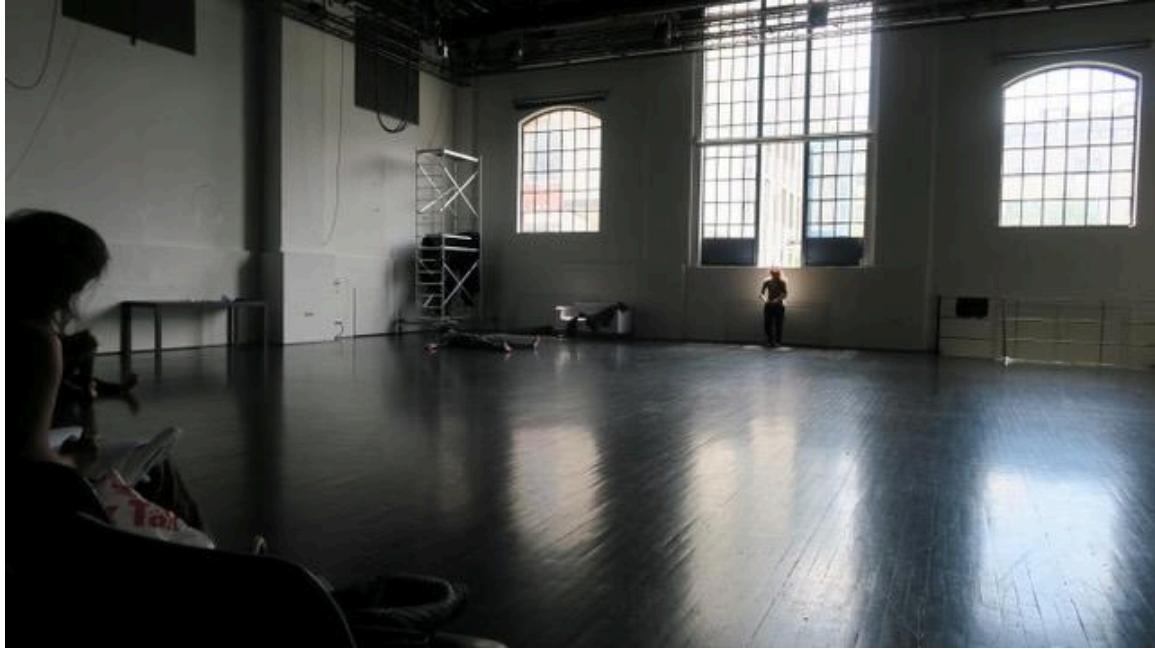
Oh, and the “locals” can also **order and join us for lunch**. In that case, send me an email, by 25.5.

Except to **confirm** participation, **I won’t be replying to the emails** received. I **won’t reply** on social media (Fb Messenger, etc.). This is for one reason only -

to reduce computer time. If you read the documents though, all should be clear.

***If you find any discrepancies in this somewhat hefty document, I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know, so I can fix them. Thank you!

Stara Elektrarna (SMEEL) - our working space





((end of this document))